

## First Paper Assignment

History 408 / due October 25, 2012 in class

This assignment is designed to be comparative; the topics below ask you to write about both the Bosworth and Allen books. Please plan to write on one of the four problems outlined below. If you have a different argument you would like to develop, you are welcome to pitch it to me, but do not expect me to approve it as a matter of course.

Structuring a comparative paper can be tricky. You may find it helpful to organize your paper so that you address all your points on Italy/Bosworth first and then Germany/Allen later, in a separate section; or you may wish to line up several points and discuss in each case how they apply to Italy and Germany. Whichever structure you choose, try to keep your argument as balanced between the books as possible. If you wish to emphasize *contrasts* rather than *comparisons* between the two countries (or books), that's fine; you don't have to assume that fascists and Nazis were always running on parallel tracks.

### The Questions

1. How do the two authors seek to relate “parts” to the whole? How does Bosworth situate Mussolini within the broader history of Italy during this period? To what extent does Northeim serve as a microcosm of the challenges facing German society during the 1920s and early 1930s? Do we see individuals and small towns making their “own” history in these books, or are they largely responding to the force of events?

2. Why did so many Italian and German liberals – people who had once espoused free speech and freedom from government interference – wind up supporting the fascists in 1921-22 and the National Socialists in 1930-33? To what extent did this reflect ideological compatibility between liberalism and these radical new ideologies, and to what extent did it have to do with the existence of common political foes?

3. How “modern” were the two movements under consideration here, Italian fascism and German Nationalism Socialism? Which aspect of these movements seem revolutionary to you, and which seem highly traditional? How did the course of rearmament tend to produce modernizing changes in the two countries, regardless of what Hitler and Mussolini may have intended?

4. After coming to power in October 1922 and January 1933, respectively, how did the Italian fascists and German National Socialists crack down on alternative forms of social and political organization in their countries? To what extent did the regimes genuinely *unite* their societies, and to what extent did they merely succeed in squelching dissent?

## **Warning**

As stated on the course syllabus, “The assignments in this course require you to formulate complex thoughts in your own words. Attempts to pass off another’s words as your own – be it on an exam or in your written work – will carry harsh penalties. Plagiarized papers will earn a ‘zero’ for the assignment and may lead to further consequences.”

Please note that borrowing someone else’s arguments wholesale – whether or not you have copied the words verbatim – is a form of plagiarism. You are strongly advised *not* to consult on-line materials of any kind in preparing this paper.

## **Format**

Please adhere to the following formatting standards.

- (1) Your paper should be double-spaced and written in a 12-point font.
- (2) At a minimum, your paper should run 1,500 words (approximately six pages). Please do not exceed eight pages.
- (3) Because you are relying upon just two authors, there is no need for you to introduce footnotes or a bibliography. For those occasions when you are quoting the authors directly or drawing heavily upon an extended factual discussion, in-text citations (Bosworth, 324) are adequate.
- (4) Be sure to use formal English. Write in complete sentences; use punctuation appropriately; and be sure to spell-check your document! Also, it is very important that your paper contain a strong introduction (at least one paragraph in length) with a clear thesis statement laying out what you intend to argue. The best papers will also feature a compelling conclusion.